

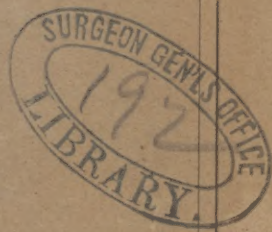
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“A PRECEDENT.”

SANITARY MATTERS
AT LARGE
AND ELSEWHERE.

BY L. C. P.



NUMBER ONE—FIRST EDITION.

LEWISTON, ME.
GEO. A. CALLAHAN, PRINTER.
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Sanitary Matters at Large.

Says a city official, I wish you could reach the Corporations, and induce them to have better sanitary conditions. They spread and bury all the effete and other waste about the premises, so that the air is constantly poisoned.

Now, is not this precisely what has been done in the southern cities where yellow fever has had *reigns* of terror again and yet again?

Says a doctor, with a swollen knee, above whose office are a father and daughter with each a reminder of mortality, one a sore finger, the other a sore "limb," "it's the closet gases and odors that are killing us all. We have not had a night's sleep for three weeks. We have *complained*, but they belong to the *Corporations*, and *they make* the City Government. They say, if you touch us we'll take our factories to some other place. This is not the only water power in the world. And so these rich companies *own* the diseases of patients and doctors, but not all of them.

But, says a high state official, "what can you do about it? People have a right to do as they will on their own premises." Says more than one doctor, "I go to see patients where they have such nuisances as a horse and cow and hens in the cellar, and when I sit down at the table to write my prescription my feet discover a sow with a litter of pigs beneath."

"But, doctor, do you take any steps to *compel*

these people to change their habits, and not disseminate the germs of disease broadcast among people with other proclivities?" "Why, no, that is the duty of the health officers." Now, there is a case of a widow dependent on her needle for the support of her family. She has in years gone by had seven of her children *down with fever* at once, from nuisances *they* could not control or get relief from by "*complaining*." Death has reaped a harvest with relentless hand from that family, whose *removals* to get better sanitary conditions were each time successful as the last, where a *nasty sink* drain on the outside of the nearest house has poisoned the atmosphere, and obliged them to close the windows, *not made* to let *down*, until three cases of diphtheria keep the children shut in, from school, and sick enough to demand the services of the doctor. Such cases may be duplicated in most cities. Does "the doctor" say to the city authorities, "*you shall attend* at once to the suppression of this nuisance?" Not at all, but he tells the distressed mother "there is malarial poison enough there to give you all the typhoid fever." And if before she is able to "move" several members of the family come down of fever, he will throw off liberally from his bills. Doctors always do this. Often *give* money to pay for drugs, *getting back ten per cent.* from the druggist, who keeps him supplied with blanks on which to write his prescriptions, which "*any* druggist can put up."

Now, every foot of real estate in every city is worth enough to pay for being kept in a sanitary condition, it is for the interest of every citizen that it should be in that condition. But *who* are the violators of sani-

tary laws mostly? *Almost mostly*, it is the city's own self, and *its* heaviest tax payers.

When "bloated bondholders" came to represent so graphically a class of rich men, did the originator of the phrase take in the fact that the malarial conditions of the palatial residences these rich men were rearing, and of the public buildings, and blocks for offices, were the *cause* of the *bloating* and *heaviness* of tax payers, as well as the *heaviness* of the taxes?

The *nuisances* among the very poor and degraded often, far too often the *degredation* growing out of unsanitary nuisances about them, is nine times in ten suppressed more readily if the premises belong to the poor persons themselves, than if it be hired of a man who hides behind an agent.

Many a rich man who owns and rents houses lives *away*, and leaves an agent to rent and collect the dues, with no discretion as to what is to be done about the repairing, and improvements which the owner has himself promised shall be done.

Without such improvements in ventilation, drainage, and sundry other matters, which at the first were needful for health and comfort, a tenant is but too often compelled to wait months and years, and if he urge his *right* to them he is told to "move, there are plenty of houses, you are not obliged to stay in this." If he seek for a "board of health" who will not *swear* that "barn-smells are healthy," and "*no drainage a good thing*," the chances are ten to one that said *board* will consider the locality an unhealthy one, from which relief can be got only by *moving*.

Now cities build sewers to promote the sanitary conditions of their citizens. They charge a large fee for entering those sewers. There are no stipulations

as to entering their roof-water so as to effectually *drain* their premises, there are no parties responsible as to the connections made, that they be perfect, and the consequence is that the whole arrangement is defective, how much so the residents are unable to determine, because of the stench which reaches them from their neighbors' premises, where *no fee* has been paid for sewer privileges, and the drainage is of the most revolting kind, noxious as death. A clergyman told me that he heard a "sanitary plumber say that he 'did not believe a dozen sewer connections in this city were properly trapped!'" Think of that!!

Almost every person who gives any thought to this matter will tell of having had *sickness* in consequence of the *stench* in the removal of night soil. Why do not the people demand that this nuisance be at once abated? The *city tubs* in other cities do this work in *hot days* with no more odors than were there before them. *Ask* that it be so here.

How now is this state of things to be remedied but for cities to have such authorities as will *execute laws* of which some people say now we have *too many*. It should not be left at the option of rich or poor what their drainage shall be, nor yet whether they will ventilate their *barns*, or let *them* and the *privies* be a *nuisance*. Policy should demand that the valuation of desirable dwellings should not be depreciated by allowing some pig-headed individual to assert his right and indulge his *taste* for bad *smells*, because,—well, *because*. Why not try this way, not quite a new one?

A Sanitary Intelligence Register.

As desperate emergencies will always call for desperate measures for their alleviation, so concert of action is desirable when it may be had for such emergencies. As through the length and breadth of our land the wail goes up for families bereft of parents or children from fevers, diphtheria or other epidemics which are always due to unsanitary conditions, the necessity of action to reach and treat these conditions is plainly obvious. What are they? is first to be considered. We all know that there are local causes more or less everywhere, mostly in cities, because of more roofs to discharge their *torrents* at the *base* of the structure, which, whether palace or hovel, whether the wide grounds are enclosed by hewn granite curbing, or the narrow yard is bounded by Paddy's pigstye or Biddy's poultry-yard, or the — st. school-yard, causes are there, disease germs fill the air, and the doctor, or the doctor's wife, says, "it goes in the air." Everybody admits that the question of sewerage, water supply, and drainage, is not yet fully understood, but this is not the *worst*. Hygiene in homes has more to do with it than all outside influences can. Certain laws of our nature cannot be evaded. Our bodies ask air, and changes of air, or the life is gone and *clay* only left. This must be looked to. If people will not see for themselves it is not to follow that because they live in their own houses they are to be allowed to make that a charnel house, whose deadly gases perpetually ascend to some higher plane where pure air is craved. Just here is where come in the uses of a board of health.

They already have the privilege of abating any outdoor nuisance of which anybody complains, if they are *convinced* that it is a *public* nuisance, or in an epidemic would be justified in entering a house and ordering out a dirty diseased mattress of straw. It is now proposed to go further, and in this and other cities to open a "sanitary intelligence register," which shall be in the hands of the board of health, showing as indications come in, and they will be as reliable as "weather indications" what are the personal habits of residents of any and all sections of the city limits or the suburbs thereof.

There are commercial registers where you can learn how a man stands financially, and it is not dishonorable to take advantage of what you learn there. Neither would it be dishonorable if a stranger came into a city to seek a home to apply at once to such a source as guide to such quarters as were reported healthful, agreeable and appropriate, be it tenement, boarding house, hotel, or church sittings.

If he is told, or rather finds recorded, that in such a house there have been cases of scarlet fever, year after year, and that all who did not die are still affected by the results, that one has chronic sore throat, another catarrh, another's eyes never got well, another is deaf, etc., would he be wise to take that house? If he go to see a house and is told "my house is not damp and never has been," let him turn to the register, find perhaps that it has always been damp, with a foul odor pervading it from utter disregard to the laws of ventilation by former occupants, and he will look again. If he finds one to his mind and takes it on the strength of the lessor's assurance that it is all right, and tight, and then it proves the

reverse, what is he to do? He is told when nicely settled, and as the cool weather comes on, he finds the parlor chimney has always been a useless leaky nuisance of which he complains, "well, if you don't like my house, just leave it, but you need not say anything to hurt the letting of the house, mind." Not at all: he can invoke the aid of the health committee, and whatever is needful to make that a healthy residence shall be done, even if it is to remind the people adjacent, above or below, by a polite little *billet-doux*, that the quality of the air they circulate perhaps might be better flavored by ventilation, or changing the base of the sink-spout. In this way the rights of lessors and lessees will be equalized,—as now any "tenant at will" can be ejected at once for non-payment of rent, and with a few days' notice, for no other reason than that they ask that unhealthy conditions be changed. But good tenants will not, after this custom becomes law, be often disturbed from caprice, as the register invites all the particulars. And the landlord will not be debarred from recording the peculiarities which make such and such a tenant an undesirable one. Frequent and repeated moving stands in many cases for what seems a total lack of thrift, or the ability to have and to hold, and yet few people will be found who change tenements for the love of changing, and the privilege of cleaning other people's dirt.

Believing that this matter thus brought home to the doors and inner sanctuaries of all citizens, good and bad alike, will meet the general approval, and supply a want long felt of getting at the causes of a large part of the diseases to which all classes are each year increasingly liable, it is proposed to try this until

a better way opens. That no time be lost, or red tape wasted, violators of sanitary laws may look at any time for a notice like the following: Mr. —, your name appears in the "Sanitary Intelligence Register." Please send word by the bearer whether you desire the aid of the authorities, whose immediate personal attention can be had by defendant, as well as complainant, free of charge. The books will be found with the City Clerk, or such deputy as the city fathers appoint.

Sanitary Work.—The Cause of Diphtheria.

Why is it that Diphtheria is more prevalent now than is usual at this season of the year, is a question asked often, and the answers are many. It is said to be a "filth disease," and most frequently occurs in cold weather. What careful observer will fail to perceive that bad odors from some source infect the premises where it occurs, and such smells as the doctor would tell one to use "carbolic acid" for, are generally those which a careful housewife can prevent, if they are not on her neighbor's premises. If they are, and she is obliged to close the windows to keep out bad air, no amount of drugs can cure the disease, be the weather hot or cold. And still worse if a filthy cellar, with the unaired accumulations of years, and the sprouts from last year's potatoes, with many a rotten potato which *will* soon produce a stench to fill the rooms upstairs and down,—for in cities most houses hold more than one family, and the upstairs tenants get the most smells, which, if

they object to, are often intensified. Now, not a few houses are so permeated with the fumes of bad *breath*, if nothing worse, that the moment the windows are closed a sense of suffocation ensues, which may be temporarily relieved by coughing or sneezing, which is at once explained by having had "too much air." As such changes of weather as we have make it needful to close the windows more in winter than summer, the result is more of diphtheria, sore throat and mumps, a name for swelling caused by non-ventilation, where unwholesome smells are the rule. The screens and double windows mostly prevent their opening at the top, and in too many homes no provision is made for letting down the windows, without which good ventilation seldom can be had. Then the curtains and the lambrequins obstruct, and the idea of disturbing the upholsterer's devices for the sake of health is preposterous. "Why, these curtains cost four dollars a window; do you suppose that I am going to spoil them?" is often said when the air is suggested as a remedy for stomach ache, toothache and neuralgia. Oh, if people could know the reason why store teeth are so fashionable, near-sightedness so common, stammering and deafness likewise, the one prayer would be for pure air.

His Neighbor's Nuisance.

How much easier it would be to pick up a man who had fallen among thieves, giving him some of your good clothes, and the loan of your horse to ride to the General Hospital, and pay or pray for him there

awhile, than to tolerate a neighbor's privy vault running over into one's yard, and vitiating the air to such an extent that the whole family, father, mother, and son have "kidney complaints," so as to make glad the heart of their doctor, who when asked "don't you think this disease comes from the *nuisances* which are about us?" says, "why, you have the sunshine as fairly as anybody can get it, I don't see what more you can ask." The wise man *he* who told Mrs. A., when her two children died of scarlet fever, "it was because of the dirty cellar," and when Mrs. B.'s two children died of diphtheria, "it was because they had no cellar." But *he* don't *defend* a nuisance: *he's* a sanitary doctor, and will not be as liable to have a "shock" in his family as the doctor who owns and rents the house where *that* privy nuisance is, which has given so much bad blood that medicine will not reinvigorate. Then how a man must feel when the relentless messenger comes to summon one of his own dear ones, and holds them quivering in his icy embrace long enough for him to remember how his "neighbor" has pleaded that his family was in mortal peril from the nuisance *he* refused to abate. Won't that man wish he had not gone by on the other side, so as to groan in spirit under the influence of paralysis and remorse?

Doctor's Wives.

It is an old saying that blacksmith's horses and shoemaker's wives and children always have to go barefoot. The inference was of course that for the sake of the *pay* from better customers they put off

their own to the last. Now, it is an indisputable fact that in the families of doctors we find *such*, and *many* diseases, as are unquestionably *preventable* ones. What is to be inferred? Why, this: that the doctor says, "now, *wifey*, in order for me to have plenty of practice, so that I can get money to run this fine establishment we love so well, *you* must set the fashion of keeping the blinds closed throughout the house, so as to have it shady. Make you *sick*, will it? You can *ride* with me as much as you like, and keep a girl to do the work. Then we will have some lambrequins in all the best rooms, so as to make it *close* at the top of the room, and allow none of the bad, effete, stinking breaths to escape. That's what makes your teeth rot? Well, what if it is? Have I not told the dentist I would play into his hands if he would play into mine? It will give the children diphtheria do you say? It is no worse for our children to have it than it is for others. But now wife if you feel so bad about it, open *one* window in Angelina's bedroom at the *top*, as health reformers say, but be *sure* you have the curtain over the opening, it will show your friends when you take them over the house, and when they ride by, that doctor's folks *do* believe in ventilation. And another thing, you keep a *board*, a thin one, over the sink hole, that will show that we have a care of our hired girl, and make a pretense at least of keeping *out smells*. Do you mean to say you *believe* those drain smells, and the *smell* of the *cooking*, after it becomes *dead air*, gives you kidney troubles and these black rings and wind-bags about your eyes. You foolish woman, is not that as common as can be with women at your age? So is paralysis? Well,

why should not doctor's wives have paralysis the same as other women?" "But, doctor, I have stood this for years, until my health is wholly demoralized, Now, I will begin, and open my windows top and bottom, so that if the neighbors come rushing in to see if we are dead any of us, they shall find that we are just going to *begin* to live. I will take down the lambrequins in the parlor instead of getting new ones for the sitting room. I will cut holes at the top of of the shades so that when they are drawn down we can still get ventilation by having a window let down at top. I find that a great deal of cold air which makes us all miserable can be let in, by opening the doors and the bottoms of the windows which is *not ventilation at all*, and does *not* let out the bad air. I wish I could knock a hole in the *top* of every double window in the city. I *will* do it in *ours*, and the stable *shall* be ventilated. *Barn smells healthy!* So are cancers!! *You* know but too well what *both mean*. Before we go to bed at night after we have entertained our friends, or your patients are dismissed to languish in homes they do not know how to make healthy ones, I will open every door and window wide for a few moments, long enough to make more peaceful sleep for me and the children." Wonder if she will stick to it, and become strong-minded, and *give* those thrifty plants which are *helping* make "patches in the baby's throat," to the "Society for the Cultivation of Flowers for Funerals," and keep the parlor *aired* all the same, whether she uses it or not, so that the bad dead air generated in seldom used rooms shall not contaminate the air of the living rooms. If she does this, hurrah for the Doctor's Wife.

The Difference in Places.

It is far more pleasant to record the good that comes of careful ventilation, than the mischief which grows out of the want of it. Says Mr. Littlefield, who has many years held the office of High Sheriff, Jailor and Mayor, "no, it is not *accidental* having the window open top and bottom, as you can see by a cobweb at the top, that it has not been closed recently. It is a principle; ventilation is one of the things which we could least afford to neglect," and as he opened a loop hole and let in the air of the corridor from which opened the cells, it was such air as many a man preaching to his Sunday congregation in churches where *cost* is not yet counted, might sigh in vain for. He said that in twenty years of service four thousand criminals had passed through his hands with but one death, and that one in no wise *belonging* there. Such a record is a rare one.

Kidney Disease.

"Doctor, have you ever asked Mr. Blank, who has kidney disease so bad, if that cistern of ancient water is still under his bedroom?" "No, I don't go setting my patients worrying about this, that, and the other thing which can't be helped. How do you suppose my medicine is going to have any effect on a man whose mind is wandering off into the cellar?" "But, doctor, don't you suppose such conditions make a difference in the *disease* itself?" "Well, I was called in here to *treat* this *disease*. If you please, you will

not disturb my patient with your flights of wisdom.”

“Not for the world, doctor, I am talking straight to you. Do you know that since they have got the city water there is five times as much used, and the cess pool where the *drainage* formerly went, refused to do duty long ago. Besides, the water instead of going into the cistern as of yore, runs onto the ground and soaks into the walls, and *about* the cellar if it does *not* stand on the surface, the water has been *pumped* out of the cistern, preparatory to taking it down. At first the water did not smell bad, but the lower it was pumped the worse it smelled, until, the pipe being too short, but two inches of water remained, and what is it like do you think? “*Not the drinking kind!*” No, I have not got through yet. Do you suppose the aroma from those potatoes which were put in the cellar right from the ground, when half of the crop was left in the hills because they were rotten, has had no effect on the kidneys? Why, on sorting those potatoes so as to save some of them, more than *half* had rotted in the cellar. No, I am not yet done. Can you believe that medicine which is for the purpose of quieting the nerves of the patient is as powerful as this odor which cannot escape through closed windows, and curtains, and blinds. And will the same medicine be all right for the different symptoms which come from the water before it was lowered in the cistern, from what remains, from potatoes with the earthy smell, from *rotten* potatoes, and turnips, and oh, save us! from the cabbages?”

“Good bye, madam, you had best take some double extracted tincture of valerian when you retire.” “Oh, but I shant rest, doctor, you’ll hear from me again.”

Ex.-Gov. DINGLEY concurs in the views expressed by Ex.-Gov. Washburn.

From Gov. Garcelon.

LEWISTON, Sept. 16, 1879.

I have not read the communication to which Mr. Kimball refers, but fully concur with him as to the *means* to be used to effect such reform in sanitary matters as are especially desirable.

From Ex-Gov. Chamberlain.

BRUNSWICK, Sept. 30, 1879.

Practical instruction as to sanitary needs and reforms is greatly demanded. I fully concur with Gov. Washburn in commending the views and plans of Mrs. L. C. P.

From Geo. L. Vose, Prof. Civil Engineering.

BOWDOIN COLLEGE, Oct. 1.

Mrs. L. C. P.,—I am very decidedly of the opinion that the time has come for the State to take decided measures to ensure the public health. Left to themselves, neither cities or towns have ever taken pains to obey the well-known sanitary laws, until much mischief has already been done. Putting it on purely economical grounds, *the State cannot afford to have unhealthy towns and cities.* * *

L. C. P. adds this notice:

In accordance with the suggestion of Prof. Chapman, Sec. of Bowdoin College, that "headquarters" for what *should* be a "State Board of Health," be established in some municipality, all people are hereby solicited to address correspondence in relation to sanitary matters to Mrs. L. C. P., care of Prof. Stanton, Bates College, Lewiston, Maine.

From Rev. W. H. Washburn.

LEWISTON, MAINE, Oct. 7, '79.

Dear Madam:—There is in my opinion no more important "reform" movement, than the one in which you are engaged. "The air we breathe," loaded as it often is with foul and poisonous odors, is I believe the *most* fruitful source of disease. Any attempt to awaken interest in the public mind concerning this matter is worthy of commendation; and every well-directed effort to inform people upon sanitary matters, is certainly one in which every well disposed intelligent citizen should be glad to assist. I for one shall always be ready to do all in my power to assist any properly organized reform movement in this direction, for it seems to me a subject of vital interest and one also which is most sadly neglected. To my mind no more proper subject of state legislation can possibly be found than this, and I hope the day is not far distant when the public shall *demand* of their legislators and lawmakers that steps shall be taken to arrest the fearfully needless waste of human life which may be traced to a reckless disregard of sanitary rules. Wishing you every success in your noble work, I remain,

Yours sincerely,

WM. H. WASHBURN,

Rector Trinity Church.

From A. J. Phipps. Supt. of Schools.

LEWISTON, Oct. 15, 1879.

I agree fully with Gov. Washburn in all he says respecting the sanitary needs of our country, and shall rejoice in any efforts that may tend to lessen them, and in all such efforts will heartily co-operate.



Gaylord 
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